



**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL
THREATS AND CAPABILITIES
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PRESS RELEASE

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OPENING STATEMENT OF JIM SAXTON

Hearing on Combating al-Qaeda and the Threat Posed by Militant Jihadists

Washington, D.C. – Thankfully the United States has avoided or otherwise thwarted attacks on the homeland since September 11th. This is in part due to our aggressive strategy of attacking the enemy abroad, so we do not face it here at home. Our success, however, is also due to our country's good fortune. We should not give way to complacency or delude ourselves into thinking that we have won this war.

The American people must understand that the masterminds of the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center continue to target this country. It is my view that al Qaeda and its affiliates remain the most dangerous threat to our national security. While Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom have successfully captured or killed much of the al Qaeda leadership, the enemy remains strong, and continues to evolve and adapt.

As our witnesses will explain today, we have entered a new phase in the Global War on Terrorism. Al Qaeda has become a more diffuse, decentralized organization with "franchise" cells proliferating across the world. Mere decapitation of the al Qaeda leadership is no longer enough. The adversary we face is much more elusive, and requires a strategy which breaks the cycle of terrorist recruitment and sustainment.

Confronting and marginalizing the radical jihadist ideology is an important way we can defeat this new iteration of al Qaeda. Ideology is what fuels suicide bombers to wreak havoc in Bali, it is ideology which motivates Muslims to take up arms and fight in Iraq and it is ideology that inspires the emergence of al Qaeda cells in England and Germany.

Finally, we must implement a deterrence strategy that is tailored for this asymmetric threat. While Cold War deterrent schemes are not applicable to non-state actors like al Qaeda, I look forward to our witnesses' thoughts on how we might deter the enemy.

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